

## THIRD ACT

## SCENE

*Morning-room at the Manor House.*

*Gwendolen and Cecily are at the window, looking out into the garden.*

*Gwendolen.* The fact that they did not follow us at once into the house., as any one else would have done, seems to me to show that they have some sense of shame left.

*Cecily.* They have been eating muffins. That looks like repentance.

*Gwendolen.* [After a pause.] They don't seem to notice us at all. Couldn't you cough?

*Cecily.* But I haven't got a cough.

*Gwendolen.* They're looking at us. What effrontery!

*Cecily.* They're approaching. That's very forward of them.

*Gwendolen.* Let us preserve a dignified silence.

*Cecily.* Certainly. It's the only thing to do now.

*Enter Jack followed by Algernon. They whistle some dreadful popular air from a British Opera.*

*Gwendolen.* This dignified silence seems to produce an unpleasant effect.

*Cecily.* A most distasteful one.

*Gwendolen.* But we will not be the first to speak.

*Cecily.* Certainly not.

*Gwendolen.* Mr. Worthing, I have something very particular to ask you. Much depends on your reply.

*Cecily.* Gwendolen, your common sense is invaluable. Mr.

Moncrieff, kindly answer me the following

question. Why

did you pretend to be my guardian's brother?

*Algernon.* In order that I might have an opportunity of meeting you.

*Cecily.* [To Gwendolen.] That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation, does it not?

*Gwendolen.* Yes, dear, if you can believe him.

*Cecily.* I don't. But that does not affect the wonderful beauty of his answer.

*Gwendolen.* True. In matters of grave importance, style, not

sincerity, is the vital thing. Mr. Worthing, what explanation